

## FINAL ACTIVITY

### Objectives:

By combining the knowledge gained in this unit, students will:

- analyze water issues of the United States,
- decide how they would deal with various issues if they were in charge,
- develop a publicity product to share with others.

### Procedure:

1. Generate a list of water issues and water areas in compromise in the United States. Write the list down. Use the internet to help you if you need ideas. Some ideas are: the Everglades water problems including loss of habitat and increased pollution; the Colorado River areas drying up due to damming of the river upstream; the channeling of the Kissimmee River; the zebra mussel population in the Great Lakes changing water quality, visibility, plant and animal life; the aquifer under Nebraska dropping hundreds of feet in the last hundred years. Brainstorm as many issues as possible. Ask the students if they realized there were so many water concerns in our country.
2. On the internet, try to find information about government spending. Make a pie chart and fill in the amount of money spent annually on water issues compared to defense spending, education, transportation, etc.
3. Ask the students what they think of this division of spending. Is this amount enough the money to spend on all of the areas where water is concerned? Is this too much money? Would it be better to spend money in other areas? What would the students do if they were in charge? What would they change? Is it important to have a Clean Water Act or would the time and money efforts be better used elsewhere? What does the Clean Water Act do? When was it enacted? What is the agency that is in charge?
4. What about other issues such as: oil spills, over used water treatment plants that spill raw sewage into our rivers, toxic elements being thrown into land fills where they leach into the groundwater? How would the students try to deal with these problems? Would they be able to do it alone? Would they need a task force to assist them? How would they be able to educate or inform the public on the subject of water quality? Ask them to create a realistic list of ways to educate the public to create awareness and to aid in prevention.
5. Brainstorm a list of examples in our past, that have brought water issues into the public eye and that have made us want to take positive action. Examples could be the Exxon Valdez oil spill, recent droughts, problems with acid rain, floods, etc. Ask the students why these issues are important and why we feel so strongly about them (the thought of ourselves getting hit with acid rain, seeing pictures of seals and otters covered with oil, etc.). When did strong environmental action begin to take place in the US?
6. Talk with the students about the concept of acting locally and thinking globally. The actions that we take in our own backyards will eventually have a larger impact. What if people had not dammed the Colorado River? What if the Kissimmee River had not been channeled? What if someone had paid more attention to the ships entering the St. Lawrence Seaway and made sure they were not carrying exotic species such as zebra mussels in their ballast? The small actions we take can be preventative but can also be extremely beneficial. It is easier not to do than to have to undo. What actions can we

start making right now that will help us in the future? Help your students generate a list of positive actions.

7. In groups or individually, create a handout, poster, brochure, website, or video that communicates the students' ideas of how we can increase awareness of how to protect watersheds, groundwater, caves, and to work toward clean water in the future. Display the final product at your school or in your community.